



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

****FAMILY DAY GUEST EDITORIAL****

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CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Family dinners promote better school performance

Celebrate Family Day on September 25

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

Getting back into a school year schedule can be challenging for families, sometimes making it hard to gather for a family dinner. However, family meals are important to school performance.

Research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University consistently finds that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to engage in risky behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, using illegal drugs, or engaging in violence. Frequent family dinners also have a connection with good academic performance and healthy eating habits. Family meals are more than just sharing a casserole. They are a time to talk. Dinner time conversations help parents learn more about their children's lives and better understand the challenges they face.

Wisconsin Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children on Sept. 25 is the kick-off event for the Family Day Initiative, which highlights the critical role that family involvement can have in a young person's life. The Wisconsin Family Day initiative encourages parents to take an active role in their children's lives through eating dinner together regularly.

I encourage schools, teachers, and families to promote and celebrate Family Day on Sept. 25. The day provides an opportunity for schools to honor parents and increase parental participation in the education of their children.

For more information and a parent brochure on family involvement and easy dinner ideas, see the Department of Public Instruction Community Learning and Partnerships website, < <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/ne/tt.html> >. For more information about school support for this initiative, visit < <http://www.casacolumbia.org> >.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTES: To download a high resolution photo of the state superintendent, visit the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >. This editorial is available electronically at < http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2006_109.pdf >.